PATTERNS OF POWER · THE SETTLEMENT PROTOCOL

The Vicar Made Statute

Henry VIII, the Anchor Relocated, and the Ownership That Survived a Restoration, 1529–1559

HELD AS TESTED, NOT REVEALED

THE VICAR MADE STATUTE
PREFACE

Preface: the collaboration, and what this study is for

On how the work was made, the question it asks, and the discipline it is held in.

This study is part of the Patterns of Power series and, like the others, it is a collaboration. The research direction, the case selection, and the judgement are the author's; the historical synthesis, the drafting, and much of the scholarly retrieval were done with Claude, Anthropic's model, each claim checked against the record before the next was begun. The method is stated openly because it is an emerging form of knowledge production and ought to be visible rather than concealed, and because a reader is entitled to know how a thing was built before deciding what to make of it.

This study exists because the case it treats was, for a long time, the sharpest live threat to the framework the series applies. That framework holds, in brief, that a settlement of armed men is stabilised by an *anchor* — a source of legitimate title placed beyond the reach of the men competing for power, so that none of them can revise it to his own advantage. The obvious objection is Henry VIII of England, who did exactly the thing the framework says cannot be done and prosper: he reached into the source of his own legitimacy, tore out the authority that had underwritten it for a thousand years, declared himself the head of a national church, and left the English monarchy *stronger* than he found it. If a king can revise his own anchor and emerge more powerful, the framework would seem to be broken at its foundation.

This study argues that the objection dissolves on close inspection, and that Henry is not the case that breaks the framework but the case that shows its most difficult manoeuvre performed in the open: the *relocation* of an anchor from one unforgeable source to another, accomplished without an interval of warlordism in between, because the replacement was built before the original was knocked out. The

framework is stated in full below; no prior reading is required. It is held as tested, not revealed. This case both confirms the framework and strains it, and the section on where it strains is the part of this study its author considers most worth keeping. To explain how an order legitimated itself is neither to praise it nor to excuse what it did — and this order burned dissenters, beheaded chancellors, and broke a monastic system that had sheltered the poor for centuries.

THE VICAR MADE STATUTE
SECTION ONE

The puzzle

A king revised the source of his own legitimacy — the one thing the framework says a ruler cannot do — and his throne grew stronger.

The framework this series applies rests on a single hard claim: that the source of a ruler's legitimate title must sit *beyond his own power to revise*, because a legitimacy a ruler can rewrite is worth no more than his current strength, and everyone can see it. A god the king cannot command, an ancient law he did not make, a bloodline he cannot forge, a sacred canon he cannot edit — these anchor a settlement precisely because the ruler is as bound by them as everyone else. The moment a ruler can revise his own source of title, the framework predicts, the anchor stops anchoring: it collapses back into naked power, and the settlement it held together should fracture.

Henry VIII appears to have done exactly the forbidden thing and won. For a thousand years, the ultimate author of legitimate Christian kingship in western Europe had been an authority outside every kingdom — the Pope, the Vicar of Christ in Rome, the head of the universal Church, whom no king could appoint, depose, or command. English kings ruled as rightful Christian monarchs partly because that external authority recognised them as such. And in the 1530s, over a dispute about a marriage, Henry simply cut the cord. He denied the Pope's authority in England, had Parliament declare *him* — the king — the supreme head of the Church of England, seized the vast wealth of the English monasteries, and made denial of his new supremacy an act of treason. He reached into the very source of his legitimacy and replaced its author with himself.

By the framework's logic this should have been a catastrophe: a self-authored legitimacy, a ruler making himself the source of his own title, the textbook definition of an anchor that cannot hold. And yet the Tudor monarchy did not fracture. It grew *more* powerful. The Crown absorbed the wealth and jurisdiction of the

Church, a whole new class of landholders rose bound to the new settlement, and within two generations the Church of England was a settled institution that has lasted to the present day. The puzzle is stark: how did a king revise his own anchor — do the one thing the framework forbids — and come out stronger? Either the framework is wrong, or something happened in the 1530s that was not what it appears to be. This study argues the latter: that Henry did not, in the end, make himself the author of English title. He made a *statute* the author, standing on a *scripture* he could not edit, and the difference is everything.

THE VICAR MADE STATUTE
SECTION TWO

The framework, for a reader who has not met it

Possession against ownership, the bystanders' problem, the anchor, and why a self-made anchor fails.

Begin with a distinction modern intuition tends to collapse. **Possession** is a present-tense physical relation: what I can hold right now, by my own strength. Force is entirely adequate to it. **Ownership** is a claim about the future and about other people: that a thing will still be mine tomorrow, mine when I am absent, mine when I die and pass to my heir, honoured by others not because they fear me but because they accept my right. Ownership is a structure of expectations about how others will behave toward a thing across time, and force — sovereign over the present — cannot reach it. The part of a holding that force cannot secure is the part that has to be manufactured by something other than force.

The political version. A settlement of powerful men resting on force alone is never safe, because of a coordination problem among them. Consider a great man deciding whether to challenge the existing distribution of holdings — to seize a neighbour's lands, or the throne. Strip out loyalty. His decision is a forecast about the *other* great men who will watch. If they stand aside, he may win. If they fall on him together, he is destroyed. Now take the watchers' problem: each asks, *is this my fight?* If holdings rest only on strength, then one man's grab is merely his gamble, and no other has a shared reason to spend blood stopping it — so each watches, knows the others watch, and predation is chronically safe. This is the coordination failure that makes a world of armed men a world of endemic war.

What breaks it is a **shared source of title** placed beyond the reach of the competitors — an *anchor*. If every man's holding derives its rightfulness from one source that none of them can seize or become, then a grab at any holding is an attack

on the ground beneath *all* of them, and each watcher's arithmetic flips: he moves against the aggressor not from loyalty but because letting the grab stand would unmake the title to his own lands. The anchor turns the watchers into an automatic coalition, and the aggressor, forecasting it, does not move.

A working anchor has four properties: it must be **determinate** (one answer to who holds what), **common knowledge** (known to all, known to be known), **attached to an office rather than a man** (so it survives a death), and — the property this case turns on — **unrevisable by any competitor**. This last is the deep one. The danger is not a strong man *breaking* the rule, which is visible and punishable. The danger is a strong man *changing* it, because if the source of title sits inside the competition, the strongest man need never break anything — he revises, and every seizure afterward is lawful. So the anchor must sit beyond the reach of the men competing for it. And the sharpest corollary, the one Henry seems to violate: **a ruler cannot be the author of his own anchor.** A legitimacy the ruler confers on himself is revisable by that ruler, visible as such to every observer, and therefore anchors nothing — it is simply his power wearing a costume. This series has watched the Roman emperor Diocletian try exactly that, declaring himself a living divinity by his own proclamation, and watched the construction collapse within two years of his abdication. The anchor must be *unforgeable by the current claimants* — which usually means placing it outside them: in a god, a dead sage's closed canon, an ancient bloodline, an impersonal procedure. The question this study must answer is how Henry appeared to author his own anchor and did not suffer Diocletian's fate.

One further tool. The framework's sharpest diagnostic is that *force never pays for what it does not need*: where a ruler who already holds power pays a real, avoidable price for legitimacy — argues a case he could have ignored, courts an assembly he could have bypassed — the payment reveals that the legitimacy was load-bearing. Watch, in what follows, everything Henry paid for that raw force would not have required.

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SECTION THREE

The historical spine

What happened, for a reader who knows nothing of the English Reformation.

By the late 1520s Henry VIII, king of England, had been married for some twenty years to Catherine of Aragon, and she had given him a daughter, Mary, but no surviving son. Henry, convinced he needed a male heir and by now attached to a court lady named Anne Boleyn, sought to have his marriage annulled — declared never validly to have existed — so that he could remarry. An annulment required the authority of the Pope, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, to whom such matters belonged. But the Pope, Clement VII, would not grant it, for reasons partly theological and partly political: Catherine was the aunt of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, whose troops had recently sacked Rome and whose goodwill the Pope could not afford to lose.

Blocked in Rome, Henry turned to a radical solution devised with his ministers, above all Thomas Cromwell: if the Pope would not free him, he would remove England from the Pope's authority altogether. Across the early 1530s a sequence of statutes passed through the English Parliament dismantling papal power in England. The decisive one, the **Act of Supremacy of 1534**, declared the king to be "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England." Denial of this was made treason by an accompanying act, and men who refused the oath — most famously Sir Thomas More, the former Lord Chancellor, and Bishop John Fisher — were executed. The Pope excommunicated Henry. England was, in law, a country whose church answered to its king and not to Rome.

Then came the money. Between 1536 and 1540, in the **Dissolution of the Monasteries**, the Crown closed every monastery, abbey, and religious house in England and Wales — institutions that together held something on the order of a quarter of the cultivated land of the country — and took their lands and wealth. Much of this vast windfall Henry did not keep. Needing ready cash for war, and

needing something more valuable than cash, he *sold* the monastic lands, at bargain prices, to nobles, gentry, and rising merchants across the kingdom. A great transfer of land created, almost overnight, a broad new class of proprietors holding former Church land on titles that flowed from the Crown's break with Rome.

Henry died in 1547. His young son Edward VI, under Protestant regents, pushed the English church further from Rome in doctrine; but Edward died a boy in 1553, and the throne passed to Henry's Catholic daughter, **Mary I**. Mary set out to undo the whole thing — to return England to Rome and restore the Pope's authority. She repealed the religious legislation, revived the heresy laws, and burned nearly three hundred Protestants. And here the case delivers its crucial test, to which this study will return: Mary reconciled England to the Pope, but she could *not* restore the monastic lands, because they now belonged to too many powerful people whose loyalty the restored Catholic settlement needed. Her 1555 Parliament settled that the buyers would keep their former monastic land — even as it declared it a sin to withhold it from the Church. Mary died in 1558, the reconciliation with Rome collapsing with her, and her Protestant half-sister **Elizabeth I** came to the throne. Elizabeth restored the royal supremacy — but with one small, telling change of wording, examined below, that reveals what the whole settlement had come to stand on.

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SECTION FOUR

The author outside the kingdom, and the author the king tried to become

The old anchor, the forbidden move, and why it should have failed.

To see what Henry did, first see clearly what he inherited. The legitimacy of a medieval English king had two layers, and the deeper one lay outside England entirely.

The surface layer was descent and coronation: a king held by inheritance of the bloodline and by anointing in the sight of God. But the anointing drew its force from a wider structure — the universal Church, headed by the Pope in Rome, the Vicar of Christ, the earthly authority through whom, in the medieval understanding, God's sanction reached every Christian throne. The Pope did not appoint the king of England; but the whole framework within which an English king was a rightful *Christian* monarch, ruling a realm within Christendom, rested on the authority of a church whose head sat in Rome and whom no English king could command, appoint, or depose. This is an anchor of the purest exogenous kind. The ultimate author of Christian legitimacy was located physically and institutionally *outside* England, beyond the reach of any English competitor for power — which is exactly why it was stable. No English magnate, and no English king, could make himself the Pope. The source of title was unforgeable by every player in English politics because it was not in England at all.

Now Henry's move, and why the framework says it should have destroyed him. In making himself "supreme head on earth of the Church of England," Henry did not merely defy the Pope. He attempted to *relocate the author of sacred legitimacy from Rome into his own person* — to become, in effect, the Vicar of Christ for England, the

source through whom God's sanction now reached the English church and, behind it, the English crown. This is the forbidden move in its purest form: the ruler making himself the author of his own anchor. By the framework's logic it should have been fatal. An anchor a king confers on himself is one he can revise at will, which every observer can see, which means it is not an anchor but a naked claim of power — Diocletian's error exactly. The title "Supreme Head" is the tell of the overreach: it does not say the king *serves* or *governs under* a sacred authority; it says the king *is* the head, the top, the source. Had the English settlement truly come to rest on Henry-as-author-of-the-sacred, it should have been as brittle as Diocletian's self-made divinity — good for exactly as long as Henry's own strength, and void the moment a rival author (say, a restored Pope under a Catholic successor) returned.

And that is precisely the test Mary's reign applied. If the new ownership of England rested on Henry having made *himself* the sacred author, then when a Catholic monarch restored the true author in Rome, everything built on the usurpation should have come undone — every monastic title voided as the fruit of schism, every buyer dispossessed. That this did *not* happen is the evidence that the settlement had come to rest on something other than Henry's person. To find what, we have to look at what Henry actually built, as opposed to what the title "Supreme Head" claimed.

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SECTION FIVE

What he actually built: scripture, statute, and a class bound by its own title

The three-part replacement anchor, and why it was not Henry.

Henry's genius — or Cromwell's — was that alongside the overreaching personal claim, he built three things that together constituted a *new* exogenous anchor, one that did not depend on Henry at all. The personal claim of "Supreme Head" was the loud part and the unstable part. The three quiet parts were what actually held.

First, scripture. The break with Rome was not justified merely as Henry's will; it was grounded in a claim about the Bible and the ancient church — that the Pope's supremacy was a historical *usurpation*, a corruption of an original order in which no foreign bishop had authority over a national church and its prince. The argument, elaborated by the king's scholars, was that royal supremacy *restored* the true scriptural and primitive-Christian arrangement that papal ambition had overthrown. Whatever its historical merit, the structural effect is what matters here: it located the ultimate authority not in Henry's will but in *scripture* — a closed, ancient text that no living hand, not even the king's, could rewrite. This is the same move this series has found wherever an anchor is built on a sacred canon: the text is unforgeable precisely because it is finished and old, belonging to no present competitor. Henry was not claiming to author the truth; he was claiming to *conform* to a truth that Rome had betrayed. That claim, unlike a naked assertion of will, put the source beyond his own reach — because scripture could be cited against him as easily as for him, which is exactly what makes it an anchor rather than a tool.

Second, statute. Henry did not proclaim the supremacy by royal decree alone. He had it *enacted by Parliament* — the realm's assembled political nation, lords and commons — and the wording of the 1534 Act is the single most revealing document in the case. It was drafted so that Parliament was not *granting* the king the title but *acknowledging* it: the Act declares that the king "is and ought to be" the supreme head, and that Parliament enacts this only "for corroboration and confirmation" of an existing fact. Read that through the framework and its purpose is transparent. Henry's lawyers understood the anchor problem exactly. If Parliament *granted* the supremacy, then Parliament was the author, and an author that grants can revoke — a revisable anchor, worth only the current balance of forces. So the Act insists the supremacy was *always already true*, merely being recognised, in order to make it look unforgeable rather than manufactured. This is the very manoeuvre the framework predicts a ruler will attempt when he needs a made thing to appear given — the same instinct that leads other orders to cloak a new arrangement in the language of eternal law. But notice what the manoeuvre *conceded* even as it overreached: by routing the supremacy through Parliament at all, Henry made the Crown-*in-Parliament* the operative author of English title — a composite, institutional author, not the naked will of one man. And a title authored by the Crown-in-Parliament is exogenous in the sense that matters: no single person, not even the king, can revise it alone, because it takes the whole legislative instrument to change what the whole legislative instrument made. Henry's own successors would discover the wall he had built; a later king, Charles I, would lose his head to it.

Third, a class bound by its own title. The Dissolution and the sale of monastic land were not only a fiscal operation; they were, in the framework's terms, the manufacture of a bystander coalition. By selling former Church land cheaply and widely to nobles, gentry, and merchants, Henry created a large and powerful class whose own property titles now flowed directly from the break with Rome. And here the mechanism is sharper than the usual account, which says only that self-interest bound the buyers to the settlement. Self-interest alone is not enough, because self-interest is exactly what a Catholic restoration would threaten — a buyer's interest lay in keeping his abbey, and a returning Pope endangered it, so bare self-interest could as easily have made him seek an accommodation. What actually bound the buyers was **shared authorship of title**: their monastic lands had been conveyed *by statute, through the Crown-in-Parliament*, on the same legal foundation as — and now

interwoven with — every other secured title in England. To void the monastic titles as the fruit of schism, a restored Catholic authority would have had to attack the authority of the Crown-in-Parliament itself, which was the ground beneath *all* English property, not only the abbey lands. So an attack on the buyers' titles was an attack on the ground beneath every proprietor's title, and the whole propertied class had reason to coalesce in defence of the settlement — not because they loved the break with Rome, but because their own estates drew from the same well. This is the anchor's bystander mechanism operating exactly as the framework describes, deliberately engineered by distributing title from a single new source until a critical mass of the powerful shared it.

Put the three together and the puzzle resolves. Henry's *personal* claim to be Supreme Head was the Diocletian move, and had the settlement truly rested on it, the settlement would have been as fragile as Diocletian's. But underneath the loud personal claim, Henry had relocated the actual author of English title from the Pope to a new composite anchor — *scripture he could not edit, statute no single man could revise, and a propertied class bound to defend the ground its own holdings now stood on.* None of those three was Henry. All three would outlive him. That is why the settlement did not die with him, and why it survived even the return of the old author under Mary.

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SECTION SIX

The restoration that could not restore

Mary's reign as the framework's cleanest test, and the wording that revealed the answer.

Mary I's reign is the experiment the framework would design to test its own claim, and it returns the framework's predicted result with unusual precision.

If the new English ownership rested on Henry's person — on his having made *himself* the sacred author — then restoring the true author in Rome should have unwound everything built on the usurpation. Mary tried to do exactly this. She was sincerely Catholic, she had the will, she repealed the religious legislation, she reconciled the realm to the Pope, and she had the heresy fires lit. If ever the schismatic settlement was going to be reversed, it was under a committed Catholic monarch with Parliament initially compliant and Rome eager to receive England back.

And the monastic lands did not come back. Mary's own Parliament, in 1555, settled that the buyers of former monastic property would *keep* it — even while the same settlement declared it sinful to retain Church land from its rightful owner. The Catholic queen who could burn Protestants by the hundred could not prise the abbey lands from the class that held them, because that class was now too broad, too powerful, and too bound to the security of its own title. The restoration of the sacred author in Rome was accomplished; the restoration of the *property* that the break from Rome had redistributed was not, because the property rested not on the Pope's absence but on the Crown-in-Parliament's authorship, which Mary would have had to destroy to reach the lands — and destroying it would have threatened every title in England, including those of the Catholic gentry she needed. The anchor

had done its work: an attack on the schismatic titles was an attack on the ground beneath all titles, and the coalition held even under a Catholic queen.

The scholarship makes the mechanism visible in a way the framework can only have hoped for. A recent quantitative study of the period finds that members of Parliament connected to former monastic lands were measurably *more likely to support Protestantism and to oppose Mary* — that holding a title derived from the Dissolution predicted resistance to the Catholic restoration. This is the shared-authorship mechanism caught in the act: men's religious-political allegiance tracked the source of their property title, because to defend their land was to defend the settlement that authored it. The buyers were bound to the break with Rome not by conviction but by the structure of their own ownership, exactly as the framework says a bystander coalition is bound.

Then comes the wording, and it is the study's final and sharpest piece of evidence. When Elizabeth I restored the royal supremacy in 1559, she did not restore Henry's title. Henry had been "Supreme **Head** of the Church of England." Elizabeth's Act made her "Supreme **Governor**." The change looks trivial and is not. "Supreme Head" is the overreaching claim — the assertion that the monarch is the *source*, the top, the author of the church's spiritual authority, the Vicar-of-Christ move that theology could not sustain (a monarch, and soon a woman, as *head* of Christ's church) and that the framework says cannot anchor because it makes the ruler the author. "Supreme Governor" steps deliberately back: the monarch does not *source* the church's authority but *governs* its earthly administration; Christ remains its head, scripture remains its anchor, and the sovereign is the steward of the settlement, not its author. The Elizabethan settlement, making the anchor durable, quietly pulled the monarch *out* of the author's seat — precisely the seat Henry had overreached to claim — and let the impersonal composite of scripture-and-statute carry the weight. The title still held by the British monarch today is Elizabeth's "Supreme Governor," not Henry's "Supreme Head," and the difference is the whole lesson of the case: the settlement stabilised only once it stopped claiming the ruler was the author of the anchor and admitted he stood, like everyone else, beneath it.

THE VICAR MADE STATUTE
SECTION SEVEN

What the case shows, and where it strains

Including the objection the framework must answer honestly.

What it shows. Henry VIII is not the case that breaks the framework; he is the case that shows its hardest manoeuvre executed successfully — the *relocation* of an anchor from one unforgeable source to another without an intervening collapse into warlordism. The reason there was no collapse is that the replacement was built before the original was removed: scripture, statute, and a propertied class bound by shared title were all in place as the papal authority was cut away, so that at no point was English title left resting on nothing but Henry's strength. The case confirms the framework's deepest claim — that a self-authored anchor cannot hold — by showing that the part of Henry's work which *was* self-authored (the personal claim of "Supreme Head") was precisely the part that had to be quietly abandoned, by Elizabeth, for the settlement to stabilise. And it confirms the bystander mechanism in an unusually clean and even quantifiable form: the Dissolution manufactured a coalition bound to the new anchor by shared authorship of title, and that coalition held even against a determined Catholic restoration, with the historical record showing men's allegiance tracking the source of their property.

The case also sharpens a tool the framework had stated only abstractly: the *expenditure* diagnostic. Henry, holding the throne by force, nonetheless paid enormous avoidable costs for legitimacy — he routed the supremacy through Parliament when he might have decreed it, he grounded it in scripture and ancient precedent when he might have rested on will, he sold the monastic lands cheaply to spread the stake when he might have kept the wealth. Each payment is the framework's tell that legitimacy was load-bearing, and together they are the blueprint

of a man building an anchor rather than merely seizing assets. Force never pays for what it does not need, and Henry paid lavishly.

Where it strains. Two honest strains, and the first is serious.

The framework predicts that revising an anchor should produce instability — and England *did* get instability, just on a longer fuse than the reign of Henry himself. The century and a half after Henry was one of the most religiously violent in English history: Mary's burnings, the Elizabethan persecution of Catholics, the Gunpowder Plot, and ultimately a civil war in the 1640s that killed the king Henry's Parliament-anchor had helped empower and convulsed the whole settlement. A defender of the framework can say — and this study does say — that the *core ownership* settlement proved remarkably durable (the monastic lands never went back, the Crown-in-Parliament grew only stronger, the national church endured), and that the violence was the working-out of *which* scripture and *which* doctrine the anchor would carry, not whether the anchor would hold. But this reply has an edge of convenience to it, and it should be admitted: the framework is better at explaining why the property settlement survived than at explaining why the religious settlement took a century and a half and a civil war to stabilise. If one insists that a successfully relocated anchor should produce a *stable* order, then Henry's England is at best a partial success, and the framework's tidy story of "relocation without warlordism" understates the real and bloody disorder that followed. The honest position is that the *ownership* anchor relocated cleanly and the *doctrinal* anchor did not, and the framework as currently stated does not fully distinguish those two things.

The second strain is smaller. Calling the "Supreme Head / Supreme Governor" change a deliberate retreat from the author's seat is an interpretation the actors did not state in the framework's terms; Elizabeth's advisers had immediate political reasons for the softer title (placating Catholics, and the awkwardness of a female "head" of the church) that need no structural theory to explain. The structural reading is, I think, correct and illuminating, but it is a reading laid over the evidence, not a claim the Elizabethans made about themselves, and a reader should weigh it as such.

THE VICAR MADE STATUTE
SECTION EIGHT

The disciplines: what this analysis must not flatten

Four cautions.

The framework demotes Henry's personal claim, but must not deny it mattered. This study argues that the load-bearing anchor was scripture-plus-statute, not Henry's headship. But the personal supremacy was not merely decorative: it was the legal hinge on which the Dissolution and the whole royal control of the church turned, and men died over it. To say it was the *unstable* part of the settlement is not to say it was unimportant — it is to say that the settlement's durability came from the parts that were not Henry, which is a different claim.

Self-interest and shared authorship are not the same thing, and the difference is the point. The traditional account of the Dissolution says the buyers backed the break with Rome "out of self-interest," and this study has insisted the real binding mechanism was subtler — shared authorship of title, which binds even against a buyer's short-term interest in accommodation. But this is a refinement of the standard account, not a refutation of it; self-interest was certainly present and real, and the framework's contribution is to show *why* it hardened into a durable structural loyalty rather than dissolving under pressure, not to deny that interest was in play.

"Legibility is not pardon" applies with full force here. This study has treated the English Reformation as a case study in the successful relocation of an anchor, analysed with a certain admiration for its structural ingenuity. That analytical stance must not launder what the thing cost. The Dissolution destroyed institutions that had, for all their corruption, sheltered the poor, tended the sick, and preserved learning for centuries; it was accompanied by executions of those who would not swear the oath, and it provoked and then bloodily suppressed a great popular rising,

the Pilgrimage of Grace, in the north. To explain the elegance of Henry's anchor-relocation is not to soften by a single life the executions, the burnings under his daughter, or the suffering of the dispossessed. The machinery was ingenious; the human cost was immense; both are true.

And the English case must not be read as a universal template. That Henry could relocate his anchor without collapse depended on specific conditions — an unusually developed Parliament capable of serving as a composite author, a scriptural-reformist current already available to ground the break, a monastic wealth large enough to manufacture a broad new proprietary class. Where those conditions are absent, an attempt to revise an anchor may well produce exactly the collapse the framework's simple form predicts. Henry is a case of the manoeuvre *succeeding*, not proof that it can be performed at will.

THE VICAR MADE STATUTE
CONCLUSION

Conclusion: the vicar made statute

Returning to the puzzle.

The puzzle was that Henry VIII appeared to do the one thing the framework forbids — revise the source of his own legitimacy — and emerged stronger, when the framework says a ruler who authors his own anchor should collapse like Diocletian into naked, brittle power.

The resolution is that Henry did not, in the end, make himself the author of English title, though he tried, and the title "Supreme Head" is the record of the attempt. What he actually did was harder and more lasting: he *relocated* the author. Before Henry, the ultimate source of legitimate Christian kingship in England lay outside the kingdom, in the Vicar of Christ at Rome — an exogenous anchor no English competitor could forge, which is exactly why it had held for a thousand years. Henry cut that cord, and for a dangerous moment reached to put himself in the vacated seat. But underneath the overreach he built a *replacement* author that was not himself and could not be forged by any single Englishman: a scripture no living hand could edit, a supremacy enacted by the Crown-in-Parliament that no one man could revise alone, and a broad class of proprietors whose own titles now flowed from the new settlement and who would therefore defend it as they defended their own land. The Vicar of Christ, as the author of English title, did not become Henry. He became *statute* — the impersonal, composite, unforgeable authority of the law-in-Parliament, standing on scripture, secured by a coalition of the propertied.

That the relocation was genuine, and not merely Henry's power in a new costume, is proved by the one event that should have undone a self-made anchor and did not: the Catholic restoration under Mary, which restored the old author in Rome and still could not claw back the lands, because the new author — the Crown-in-Parliament — was now the ground beneath all English title and could not be attacked without attacking everyone's. And the final proof is in a single changed

word. When the settlement stabilised under Elizabeth, the monarch stopped being the church's "Head" and became its "Governor" — stepped out of the author's seat Henry had overreached to claim, and stood, at last, *beneath* the anchor rather than upon it. That is the framework's deepest claim vindicated by the case that seemed most to threaten it: a ruler may relocate an anchor, but he may not *become* one, and the English settlement grew strong only when it quietly conceded that even the king who made the church was subject to the law and the scripture that made the king. The lie that Henry authored the sacred was the part that had to be dropped. The truth that the statute did — that survived, and rules England still.

THE VICAR MADE STATUTE
SOURCES

A note on sources and scholarship

What this rests on, what is standard, and what is contested.

The framework. The theory applied here — possession against ownership, the bystanders' coordination problem, the anchor and its four properties, the impossibility of a self-authored anchor, the sole-authorship condition, and the expenditure diagnostic — is developed in the companion papers of this series and applied here rather than argued from scratch. Its borrowed components include Jeremy Bentham on property as secured expectation, Morris Cohen on ownership as delegated coercive power, Max Weber on legitimate authority, Roy Rappaport on the unfalsifiable and unforgeable character of a closed sacred canon, Thomas Schelling on coordination, and Michael Chwe on public ceremony and common knowledge. The comparison to Diocletian's self-made divinity follows this series' reading of the Roman case.

The historical spine. Henry's failure to obtain a papal annulment and the political entanglement of Clement VII with Charles V; the Reformation Parliament and the Act of Supremacy of 1534 declaring the king "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England"; the treason legislation and the executions of More and Fisher; the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536–1540), the scale of monastic landholding (roughly a quarter to a fifth of cultivated land), and the sale of monastic lands to nobles, gentry, and merchants; the Pilgrimage of Grace (1536) and its suppression; the reign of Mary I, her reconciliation with Rome, the Marian burnings, and the 1555 settlement leaving former monastic lands with their buyers; and Elizabeth's Act of Supremacy of 1559 substituting "Supreme Governor" for "Supreme Head" — all follow the standard record. The verified wording of the 1534 Act (that it "acknowledges" rather than "grants" the title, declaring the king "is and ought to be" supreme head "for corroboration and confirmation" of an existing fact)

is the load-bearing textual evidence for the reading offered here, as is the documented substitution of "Governor" for "Head" in 1559.

Contested and interpretive. The reading of the 1534 Act's "acknowledging not granting" wording as a deliberate attempt to make the anchor appear unforgeable rather than manufactured is this study's structural interpretation, though the "not granting" character of the wording and its implication that Parliament could not therefore withdraw the title are noted in the standard legal literature. The claim that the buyers of monastic land were bound by *shared authorship of title* rather than mere self-interest is this framework's refinement; it is supported by, but goes beyond, the recent quantitative finding (in work by Koyama and collaborators) that MPs connected to monastic lands were more likely to support Protestantism and oppose Mary. The reading of "Supreme Head → Supreme Governor" as a structural retreat from the author's seat is this study's interpretation, laid over evidence the Elizabethans explained in more immediate political terms. And the overall characterisation of the case as a successful *anchor relocation* rather than a revision — the heart of this study's answer to the puzzle — is the framework's analytical claim, offered in its own terms and tested against the record, above all against the Marian restoration that failed to reverse the property settlement.

On what is not attempted. This study makes no claim to original historical research. It is an analytical synthesis applying a structural framework to an established record, and its contribution, if any, lies in the questions put to the material — above all the reading of the English Reformation as the relocation of an exogenous anchor from the papacy to the Crown-in-Parliament-upon-scripture, the demotion of Henry's personal supremacy to the unstable and later-abandoned part of the settlement, and the identification of shared authorship of title as the mechanism that bound the propertied class and defeated the Marian restoration. Where the framework and the record disagree, the record wins, and the section on where the case strains — in particular the century and a half of religious violence that a tidy "relocation without collapse" story understates — is the part its author considers most worth keeping.